DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 279 999 CS 008 695

AUTHOR Whitis, Judith A.
TITLE A Study to Measure the Standard Collegiate Level Freshman Writing Course Requirements at Olivet Nazarene University against Those of Other Christian College Coalition Members.
PUB DATE 87
NOTE 73p.; M.A. Thesis, Olivet Nazarene University, Illinois.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Dissertations/Theses - Master Theses (042)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Comparative Analysis; *Course Descriptions; *Course Organization; Educational Trends; *Evaluation Methods; *Freshman Composition; Higher Education; Required Courses; Textbook Evaluation; *Writing Evaluation; *Writing Exercises; *Writing Research
IDENTIFIERS *Christian College Coalition; *Olivet Nazarene College; Witte (Stephen)

ABSTRACT

To determine whether Olivet Nazarene University's standard freshman writing course requirements measure favorably with those of the majority of the 75 Christian College Coalition (CCC) members, a study compared the textbooks, papers, activities, and evaluation procedures required by each institution. Stephen Witte's "National Survey of College and University Writing Program Directors" was used to evaluate the freshman writing course syllabi of the 56 institutions responding to a mail survey. Analysis showed that all of the respondents require some kind of freshman writing course, though most require only one semester while Olivet requires two. Overall, results indicated that Olivet's freshman writing course syllabus measured favorably with the syllabi of CCC members in its statements regarding (1) attendance, (2) manuscript format, (3) the requirement of some type of rhetoric textbook, (4) late work policy, (5) a grading system, (6) essay development, (7) topic/thesis sentences, (8) revision/editing, (9) paragraph development, (10) usage, (11) mechanics, and (12) evaluation on out-of-class essays, attendance, and a final examination. (Conclusions are also drawn concerning trends in the freshman writing classroom. Appendixes contain a list of CCC members, samples of the survey correspondence, and a list of the responding CCC members. Ten tables are included in the text.) (JD)

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A STUDY TO MEASURE THE STANDARD COLLEGIATE LEVEL FRESHMAN WRITING COURSE REQUIREMENTS AT OLIVET NAZARENE UNIVERSITY AGAINST THOSE OF OTHER CHRISTIAN COLLEGE COALITION MEMBERS

BY

JUDITH A. WHITIS

B.A., Olivet Nazarene University, 1967

THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts in Education
in the Graduate Division of
Olivet Nazarene University, 1987

Kankakee, Illinois

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer wishes to express her sincere appreciation to Dr. Gary W. Streit, advisor and chairman of the master's committee, for his professional assistance and interest in the research and preparation of this study. Special gratitude is expressed to committee members Dr. Lottie Phillips and Dr. M. D. White for their counsel and support.

Others to whom the writer wishes to express appreciation are sons Gregory and Matthew Whitis. Special thanks are expressed to husband, Noel Whitis, whose continued understanding and encouragement made the task less awesome.

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THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

The Statement of the Problem

This research proposes to measure the standard collegiate level freshman writing course requirements at Olivet Nazarene University against the corresponding course requirements of the member colleges of the Christian College Coalition.

The Subproblems

1. The first subproblem. The first subproblem is to research and/or devise an evaluation scale that will act as the standard for measurement.

2. The second subproblem. The second subproblem is to determine the variations in course requirements.

3. The third subproblem. The third subproblem is to construct a scoring key for the evaluation scale to measure the various course requirements.

4. The fourth subproblem. The fourth subproblem is to analyze and interpret the treated data in order to evaluate the course requirements.

The Importance of the Study

The English department at Olivet Nazarene University recognizes the importance of curriculum evaluation. One way to assist in such evaluation is to survey like institutions in order to provide Olivet and the profession at large with reliable and current information concerning various programs. This study surveys Christian College Coalition members regarding their standard collegiate level freshman writing course requirements in

the hope that it will help readers develop a greater understanding of these courses and that it will aid in the development of methods to evaluate the freshman writing courses and program at Olivet. The research further intends to help strengthen these courses whose importance to the liberal arts core curriculum is rarely denied but whose very existence as required courses is frequently debated.

THE REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

College freshman composition has become a standard offering in nearly all of America's colleges and universities since its inception by Harvard in 1874. Originally, the teaching of composition was consigned to English departments almost by accident. "But what was acquired by default has become the largest single component of the American college and university curriculum and a program so crucial to the welfare of English departments that it conditions most of what they do."[1] This program, though large and vital, has often become the target of ridicule, change, and even abolition. Differences of opinion regarding goals, requirements, and methodology persist. English professionals and research often describe and criticize the diverse nature of freshman composition.

These differences of opinion in the English community regarding the condition of undergraduate English in the United States and the lack of comprehensive, reliable information on the subject prompted the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) to inaugurate in 1967 "a systematic study of the whole of undergraduate English in the United States."[2] Thomas Wilcox, director of the project, reported on the findings of The National Survey of Undergraduate Programs in English in journal articles and in the book The Anatomy of English published in 1973. One portion of the survey was devoted to freshman English.

Wilcox gathered data through on-the-spot interviews with sixty-three English departments of unusually high quality or

effectiveness and through a thirty-nine page questionnaire sent to a random sample of three hundred English departments of four-year colleges and universities. The response rate was ninety-five percent. Data were analyzed by coding answers, compiling statistics, and establishing facts.

Wilcox found that 93.2 percent of all institutions required freshman to take at least one term of English; 77.8 percent required them to take two. The most common size of freshman English classes was about twenty-five students. Of all respondents, 3.5 percent required freshmen to write more than fifteen papers a term; 40.2 percent required eleven to fifteen papers a term, or about a theme a week; another 23.6 percent required nine or ten; only 16.5 percent required fewer than seven papers a term. A long paper, usually a research paper, was assigned by 43.3 percent. Most freshmen, then, at the time of Wilcox's survey, wrote about five thousand words for their English teachers during their first term at college.[3]

Wilcox's study found that handbooks were the most frequently required text (73.1%) followed by anthologies of literature (55.6%), anthologies of essays (51.5%), separate literary works (48.1%), and rhetorics (45.1%). The trend at this time, according to Wilcox, seemed to be away from mass adoption of anthologies and toward the varied use of individual texts selected by individual teachers. Wilcox saw this as a welcome indication of diversification and experimentation in freshman English.[4]

Following the publication of Thomas Wilcox's The Anatomy of English, Edward P. J. Corbett, editor of College Composition and

Communication, commissioned in the fall of 1973 another nationwide survey of four-year colleges and universities to "uncover information about the present status of the composition requirement and Freshman English around the country."[5] Ron Smith conducted this survey by sending out questionnaires to a random sample of seven hundred four-year colleges and universities in all states and the District of Columbia. Respondents returned 491 completed questionnaires, a seventy percent response.

Smith found that seventy-six percent of all schools had a composition requirement of one course or more, a drop of 17.2 percent from Wilcox's findings. Only forty-five percent of schools surveyed required two or more courses, a drop of 32.8 percent. Smith further noted that at twenty-four percent of schools surveyed there was no composition requirement as such.[6] Change had occurred and probably would continue to occur in freshman English programs. Smith projected that more schools would be dropping or diminishing the composition requirement, and more schools would be exempting students through the administration of equivalency examinations.[7]

Less than a year after Smith's survey for College Composition and Communication, the Association of Departments of English (ADE) in May and June of 1974 conducted a survey on freshman English courses and programs. Four hundred and thirty-six institutions from forty-nine states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico returned the three-page questionnaires. The ADE survey analyzed results according to types of institutions, public and private colleges and universities.

Between 21.3 percent and 45.5 percent of the institutions

required one semester of freshman composition; between 35.2 percent and 45.5 percent required two semesters. The only institutions requiring no composition at all were twelve percent of responding private colleges. The average size of freshman composition classes ranged from twenty-one for private colleges and universities to 23.8 for public universities. The most common required writing assignment was by far the short theme under one thousand words. From 72.7 percent to 89.5 percent of schools required these themes. The next most common writing assignment was the research paper required by 28.2 percent to 34.7 percent of the institutions. Other writing assignments such as literature-based themes, longer expository themes, in-class writing, personal experience writing, creative writing, journal writing, business and technical writing all ranked well below twenty percent.[8]

When given a list of texts from which to identify their basic texts, most respondents marked "others," 31.4-37 percent. But of those texts listed, the most commonly used basic texts in order of preference were Hodges and Whitten's Harbrace College Handbook (24-32.6%), McCrimmon's Writing with a Purpose (6.5-21.7%), and Baker's Practical Stylist (8.7-19.6%). Anthologies or readers were used in conjunction with the basic text by 63-75.6 percent of the schools followed by selected novels (19-34.8%), selected short stories (9.3-28.3%), films (10.8-17.4%), student workbook and study guide (8.1-15.2%), and magazines and newspapers (4.7-17.4%).[9]

The ADE survey noted that the role of the freshman English composition course had been changing. In light of that, the

survey sought to determine what institutions considered to be the main purpose of the courses they taught. Overwhelmingly the schools responded that their main purpose was "to teach the student to become a more articulate writer, able to express thoughts, experiences and ideas clearly."[10] At the time of this survey innovations and new programs were occurring in the freshman English curriculum because of more standardized goals and the call for renewed emphasis on "fundamentals." But even so, most programs remained traditional, studying formal rhetoric through the organization of paragraphs and short themes according to patterns of exposition, using works of literature as models, and usually also including a research paper.

In the April 1981 issue of The Forum for Liberal Education the nine schools featured and the fifteen additional schools mentioned highlighted some of the ways colleges and universities were meeting the challenges of improving student writing. Some schools' programs included noteworthy features.

Yale University had at the time of the survey no specific composition requirement, but it offered several composition courses. Principles of Composition and Problems in Composition did not have texts; problems that arose from student assignments provided the basis for class lectures and discussion sessions.[11] The more traditional literature-oriented composition course first offered in 1976 as a one-semester unit was expanded in 1978 to a two-semester sequence because it was the most popular freshman offering.

St. Edward's University required two courses in composition. Students wrote four papers in the first course. Then on the

basis of a post-course essay, they were placed in a second course--Analysis and Composition II, Dimensions of Literature, or Intermediate Writing. Better writers chose between the latter two courses; all three courses provided further instruction in writing. Students had to receive a grade of C or better in both courses and write an acceptable end of the year essay to qualify as proficient in basic English skills.[12]

Beaver College placed students in the writing program on the basis of a required two part writing sample written during freshman orientation. In the first part of the test, students wrote a one paragraph summary of a one thousand word passage from a college level textbook; in the second part, students wrote an open-ended expository response. The writing program director believed that the summary was the most useful tool for measuring the students' writing and reading abilities.[13] Beaver College's composition courses introduced students to a variety of writing processes and included a cross-disciplinary reading list. Students were required to write at least one thousand words per week, but only four papers were graded each semester. Instructors stressed basic problems and conventions in writing and incorporated in the course such techniques as editing, rewriting, and peer evaluation.

The University of Michigan created an English Composition Board in 1976 that was charged with proposing a plan that would guarantee the literacy of all students before graduation. The program that was devised centered around the existing composition course. All new incoming students were required to take a one hour writing assessment examination. Students were given a

required opening sentence and a choice of a second sentence for their writing sample. Based on the assessment of these samples, students were placed in five categories of competence that corresponded to the freshman writing requirement: exemption from introductory composition, exemption plus writing workshop, introductory composition, introductory composition plus writing workshop, and tutorial. Sixty-two percent of the students took introductory composition, a course designed to teach the various modes of writing required in college.[14]

Students at Harvard University were required to take one of six courses in expository writing during their freshman year. All courses required one major paper with a suggested length of eight pages, and all incorporated introduction to research. Class size averaged fifteen students and rarely exceeded seventeen.[15]

To continue and update its survey of writing programs, The Forum for Liberal Education published in its October 1984 issue another description of programs in fifteen additional colleges and universities in the United States. At the time of this survey the freshman composition course was a graduation requirement in eight of every ten colleges and universities.

At the University of Massachusetts at Amherst the composition requirement included two three-credit courses, the second of which was required the junior year. The freshman writing course focused on students' writing using their essays as the course's primary text. Students completed seven essays that were peer-edited, revised, faculty-reviewed, and rewritten. Maximum class size was twenty students.[16]

In the fall of 1984 freshmen at Albright College were exposed to the concepts of multiple draft and peer review in their composition classes. The composition requirement included Composition, a basic writing course from which some students were exempt, and Writing about Literature, in which students wrote a series of papers based on readings.

Eastern Oregon State College replaced a required three-course writing sequence with a writing proficiency examination. Students had to complete one composition course before taking the examination. Students had to complete an additional writing course each time they failed the proficiency examination and before they could take the test again.

In the November 1983 edition of College English Clinton S. Burhans Jr. reported on a survey he conducted in which he studied "a representative and statistically significant sampling of four-year college and university catalogs."[17] He studied 263 catalogs from fifty states and the District of Columbia. Burhans identified composition course descriptions as current-traditional or contemporary. The current-traditional approach as described by Richard E. Young involves:

1. Emphasis on product rather than on process;
2. Analysis of discourse into words, sentences, and paragraphs;
3. Classification of discourse into description, narration, exposition, and argument;
4. Strong concern with usage and style;
5. Preoccupation with the informal essay and research paper.[18]

The contemporary approach described by Maxine Hairston as emerging in the past two decades from new theory and research in writing involves:

1. Focus on the writing process;
2. Strategies for invention and discovery;
3. A base in rhetoric with audience, purpose, and occasion prominent;
4. Writing as recursive rather than linear;
5. Viewing writing as intuitive and non-rational as well as rational;
6. Writing as a way of learning and developing;
7. Variety of writing modes, expressive as well as expository;
8. Information from other disciplines, especially cognitive psychology and linguistics;
9. A base in linguistic research and research into the composing process;
10. The principle that writing teachers should be people who write.[19]

Burhans found that the nature of most general writing courses was severely current-traditional in concepts, methods, and goals: eighty-nine percent of all basic writing courses were so described. Only one to five percent of writing courses reflected any influence from the contemporary approach. A widespread emphasis on exposition was found in fifty-nine percent of the standard composition courses. The traditional one or two-semester or one-to-three term freshman course was all most students were required to take, and this course was often a

literature course with critical and analytical papers and little direct instruction in writing. Additionally, twenty percent of colleges and universities required no writing courses whatever, and fifty-four percent offered exemptions by various means such as proficiency, CEEB, CLEP, and challenge tests.[20]

Undoubtedly, the most comprehensive study in the last six years concerning writing programs at the college level was conducted by Stephen P. Witte and others at the University of Texas at Austin. The study was undertaken to provide the profession at large with reliable and current information about college and university writing programs. The findings of the study were published in August 1981 in a report entitled A National Survey of College and University Writing Program Directors: Technical Report Number 2 . A follow-up, companion report was published in January 1982 entitled A National Survey of College and University Writing Teachers: Technical Report Number 4.

Witte initially surveyed by letter the over 550 writing program directors identified on the mailing list of the Council of Writing Program Administrators. Of these directors 259 indicated willingness to participate in the survey. Of the 259 directors 127 (49.04%) completed and returned the extensive questionnaire that had been reviewed by consultants Richard L. Larson and Richard Lloyd-Jones. Eighty-nine percent of the respondents were from four-year colleges and universities from all areas of the country. The remaining eleven percent represented two-year colleges.[21]

Witte found that among institutions requiring composition

courses, 93.4 percent required students to take at least one course at the freshman level while only 6.6 percent required no course at all. Twenty-four percent had only a one-course requirement while 69.4 percent had a two or three-course requirement at the freshman level. The most common composition course was an expository writing course that accounted for 57.92 percent of all introductory composition courses. The second most frequent course was literature and critical writing accounting for 16.17 percent of freshman composition courses. These two courses collectively served as the basic writing course for the majority of the students enrolled in the schools included in Witte's study. The average class size of the expository writing course was 22.90. Classes in literature and critical thinking averaged 27.45 students, an increase of 4.50. The smallest average class size was found in the four-year institutions while the largest was found in the two-year colleges.[22]

Of the responding institutions that taught required freshman writing courses, 64.61 percent indicated that they had a formal syllabus for their first-semester/quarter course, and 38.94 percent indicated that they required their teachers to follow the syllabus. In second-semester/quarter courses 66.67 percent had formal syllabi, and 38.10 percent required their use.[23]

Proficiency examinations were used by 44.1 percent of responding institutions to determine advancement through the undergraduate curriculum. In some cases the examination was used as an exit examination to meet course or graduation requirements. A procedure for exempting students from required writing courses was followed by 80.3 percent of the schools. Sixty-three percent

of these required a writing sample, either alone or in conjunction with some other measure, to determine exemptions. Many institutions used standardized tests for exemption purposes: Advanced Placement, 34 percent; ACT Verbal, 29 percent; other (often in-house objective test of grammar and usage), 24 percent; CLEP with a writing sample, 23 percent; SAT Verbal, 23 percent; CLEP without a writing sample, 16 percent; ECT with a writing sample, 7 percent; TSWE, 6 percent; TOEFL, 3 percent; SAT Quantitative, 2 percent; and SAT Total Score, 2 percent. On the average 10.39 percent of the students were exempted from at least one required freshman writing course.[24]

When surveying the types of textbooks used in freshman writing courses, Witte found that eighty-eight percent of the courses required a classroom rhetoric, either with or without a handbook in first-semester/quarter courses. Further, 54.7 percent required nonfiction readers, and 58.1 percent used a grammar and usage handbook in the first-semester/quarter course. Other texts such as sentence workbooks, paragraph workbooks, style books, anthologies of fiction and/or poetry, and combination anthologies ranked well below fifty percent. Witte concluded that first semester/quarter freshman writing courses were not usually literature-based, and the study of sentences, paragraphs, and style in isolation did not figure importantly in these courses.[25] In second semester/quarter writing courses Witte found a continued reliance on classroom rhetorics and on grammar and usage handbooks. These courses, however, showed a substantial increase in the use of the literature anthology, the combination anthology, the nonfiction anthology, and the style

book. Witte concluded that second-semester/quarter freshman writing courses tended to be more dependent on readings, perhaps literary, than were the first-semester/quarter courses.[26]

Another portion of Witte's survey included an analysis of the amount and kinds of writing assigned in freshman writing courses. First, Witte determined the average number of pages written in first and second-semester/quarter courses and converted it to total number of words. The average number of pages of 150 words was 35.5; the average number of words required was 5,325 in first-semester/quarter courses.[27] Witte assumed that these figures represented only pages submitted as original, extended pieces of writing excluding drafts, revisions, or short sentence assignments. Continuing this analysis, Witte determined that in first-semester/quarter writing courses all institutions required about the same number of papers, eight, using process, description, analysis, exemplification, and comparison/contrast as the principal methods of development. The number of papers required in all institutions in second-semester/quarter courses was 4.68; the average number of words was 5,610. The bulk of these papers was written to persuade, to inform, or to prove.[28] Witte also found that the research paper was required more often in the second than in the first-semester/quarter courses.

In determining the source or sources of evaluation of student performance in freshman writing courses, Witte found that students' writing weighed heavily in the grades they received. The most important source of evaluation was the out-of-class essay followed by the in-class essay and the final examination which took the form of a graded essay by 72.4 percent of the

respondents and a graded essay combined with an objective test by 27.6 percent. Tests over readings and tests over lectures contributed more to final grades in second-semester/quarter courses than they did in the first. This result indicated to Witte as did the survey of textbooks and classroom activities that the second-semester/quarter courses were probably more attentive to the interpretation of written texts, whether fiction or nonfiction.[29]

Witte's survey included prose responses on various areas of college writing programs. One area of response dealt with what writing program directors believed were the most successful aspects of their programs. In order of preference, the ten most frequently cited successful aspects were writing laboratory/workshop, clear and effective prose for an audience, teacher training programs, peer tutoring/collaborative learning, placement procedures, writing as process, getting tenured faculty to teach writing, revision skills, using a common syllabus, and using student writing as the text.[30]

A major conclusion of Witte's survey was that writing programs were generally very different from one another, that each was designed primarily to address the local needs of the institution, the department, and the student body. Witte further concluded that while his report focused on the general nature of college writing programs, on constructing a profile that reached across institutional boundaries, the specific methods used to achieve the goal of helping students become better writers was finally the most important part of any writing program.

Notes

[1]Thomas W. Wilcox, "The Study of Undergraduate English Programs: Some Preliminary Findings," College English 29 (March 1968): 441.

[2]Thomas W. Wilcox, The Anatomy of College English (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers,1973), p. 63.

[3]Thomas Wilcox, "The Varieties of Freshman English," College English 33 (March 1972): 686-87.

[4]Wilcox, "The Varieties...," pp. 694-95.

[5]R. Smith, Implications of the Results of a Nationwide Survey for the Teaching of Freshman English, Paper presented at annual meeting of Conference of College Composition and Communication, 1974, p. 1.

[6]Smith, p. 2.

[7]R. Smith, "The Composition Requirement Today: A Report on a Nationwide Survey of Four-Year Colleges and Universities," College Composition and Communication 25 (1974): 148.

[8]P. Tigar, "ADE Survey of Freshman English," ADE Bulletin 43 (November 1974): 15-16.

[9]Tigar, p. 17.

[10]Tigar, p. 19.

[11]Harvey Weiner and Elaine Maimon, eds., "Comprehensive Writing Programs," The Forum for Liberal Education 3 (April 1981): 3.

[12]Weiner and Maimon, p. 4.

[13]Weiner and Maimon, p. 6.

[14]Weiner and Maimon, pp. 8-9.

[15]Weiner and Maimon, p. 13.

[16]Peggy Ann Brown, ed., "Writing Programs," The Forum for Liberal Education 7 (October 1984): 7.

[17]Clinton S. Burhans Jr., "The Teaching of Writing and the Knowledge Gap," College English 45 (November 1983): 640.

[18]Burhans, p. 642.

[19]Burhans, pp. 642-43.

[20]Burhans, p. 647.

[21]Stephen P. Witte et al., A National Survey of College and University Writing Program Directors: Technical Report Number 2 (Austin, Texas: Texas University, 1981), pp. 3-4.

[22]Witte et al., pp. 30-41.

[23]Witte et al., p. 41.

[24]Witte et al., pp. 55-56.

[25]Witte et al., pp. 58-59.

[26]Witte et al., pp. 59-60.

[27]Witte et al., p. 72.

[28]Witte et al., pp. 74-76.

[29]Witte et al., pp. 80-82.

[30]Witte et al., p. 96.

THE DATA

The Hypothesis

The hypothesis is that the standard collegiate level freshman writing course requirements at Olivet Nazarene University measure favorably with the majority of the corresponding course requirements of the member colleges of the Christian College Coalition as measured against the standards set by Stephen Witte's National Survey of College and University Writing Program Directors.

Sample Selection and Response Rate

In July 1986 the mailing list of the member colleges of the Christian College Coalition (CCC) headquartered in Washington, D.C., was requested and received from Dr. Ivor Newsham, Vice-President for Academic Affairs at Olivet Nazarene University. (See Appendix A for a list of member colleges of the CCC.) Coalition schools were chosen to participate in this study on the recommendation of Dr. Stephen Pusey, Chairman of the Division of Education and Psychology at Olivet Nazarene University, because Olivet is a member of the Coalition and because of the homogeneous qualities of the group. The CCC, founded in 1976, has a membership of seventy-five Christian, four-year, accredited liberal arts colleges and universities that represent the evangelical philosophy of higher education. Members affirm and practice the joining of a personal Christian faith commitment by faculty and staff members and an adherence to academic excellence.

The next step in the study was to determine the kind of information to seek. Dr. Gary Streit, Chairman of the Division of Graduate Studies and the Department of English at Olivet, recommended that requirements of standard collegiate level writing courses be analyzed. Further, in order to provide a method that would require a minimum amount of time and effort from the participants, requests were made for course syllabi from the English department chairs of the Coalition colleges. A letter was mailed to each English department chair at the seventy-four CCC schools excluding Olivet requesting syllabi for their standard collegiate level freshman writing courses. The letter explained the nature of the study and asked for a response by October 1. Enclosed with the request was a card on which respondents could express a desire to receive results of the study and a stamped, self-addressed envelope that expedited the return of the syllabi. If no response was received by October 1, a follow-up letter was sent to each non-respondent requesting participation by October 23. (See Appendices B, C, D for samples of letters and card of enclosure.) This procedure, though simple, provided comprehensive and specific data for the study.

Of the seventy-four requests, fifty-six (75.67%) responded with course syllabi or descriptions. (See Appendix E for a list of responding institutions.) The rate of return was satisfying and reflected a high level of cooperation among Christian College Coalition members. Most of the respondents were English department chairs who included departmental syllabi or individual syllabi from various members of their respective departments. Hereafter in this report, these respondents will be called by the

name of their institution.

Syllabi from Olivet Nazarene University were added to the syllabi from the fifty-six responding institutions before the data were compiled. Hereafter, Olivet will be included in the number of respondents; the number will then be fifty-seven (76.0%). Of these fifty-seven institutions forty-eight are four-year colleges and nine are universities. (Hereafter for economy all institutions will be called colleges.) All areas of the country appear to be adequately represented from Washington to California in the West, from Minnesota to Mississippi in the central region, and from Massachusetts to Florida in the East.

Treatment of the Data

The first step in the treatment of the data was to find a valid and reliable evaluation scale of standard collegiate level freshman writing course requirements with which to analyze the syllabi. After extensive research, A National Survey of College and University Writing Program Directors: Technical Report Number 2 by Stephen Witte and others of the University of Texas at Austin was chosen as the standard. Witte's report is both current and comprehensive. Course characteristics mentioned by Witte were categorized and listed vertically on two charts, one for first quarter/semester courses and one for second quarter/semester courses (hereafter called semester). Asterisks were placed beside each course requirement or activity listed from Witte to clearly identify them as opposed to other requirements added later that did not appear on Witte's lists but did appear in various syllabi from the respondents. The initials of participating colleges were listed horizontally on the charts.

Olivet Nazarene University was listed first, and the remaining colleges were then listed alphabetically.

Next, syllabi from each college were identified, labeled, and separated. Syllabi for first semester courses were treated separately from syllabi for second semester courses. Syllabi of courses that were not standard collegiate level freshman writing courses were disregarded. The syllabi were carefully read. Course requirements and activities mentioned in the syllabi were marked on the charts beside the corresponding requirement and under the college they represented. If a requirement or activity was mentioned that was not represented on the chart, it was added to the list without an asterisk behind it. This differentiated it from Witte's requirements and activities which appeared on the lists with asterisks behind them. Further, it should be noted that only items specifically mentioned in syllabi were tabulated and are reported on here. Some syllabi were much more inclusive and comprehensive than others. Some colleges may indeed include requirements and activities that their syllabi do not reflect, but because they were not included in the syllabi, they are not included in the numbers reported here.

When the charting was completed, a total number (N) was tabulated for each requirement or activity. These numbers were converted to percentages (%). When it applied, the mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) were also computed.

General Course Requirements in First and Second Semester Standard Collegiate Level Freshman Writing Courses

This section reports on various general course requirements in first and second semester standard collegiate level freshman

writing courses of the fifty-seven responding colleges. The findings appear in Tables I and II.

Table I--General Course Requirements in First Semester Standard Collegiate Level Freshman Writing Courses

Requirement	N	%
1 course only required *	34	59.6
elective course offered *	3	5.26
exemption allowance *	2	3.51
placement policy *	9	15.8
expository writing *	53	93
lit & critical thinking *	5	8.77
bus/tech writing *	3	5.26
research writing *	33	57.9
attendance policy *	48	84.2
formal course syllabus *	51	89.5
common syllabus *	9	15.8
manuscript format	44	77.2
plagiarism statement/policy	23	40.4
late work policy	45	78.9
grading system	34	59.6
grading sheet for writing	16	28.1

Table II--General Course Requirements in Second Semester Standard Collegiate Level Freshman Writing Courses

Requirement	N	%
elective course offered *	0	0
exemption allowance *	0	0
placement policy *	0	0

expository writing *	4	17.4
lit & critical thinking *	15	65.2
bus/tech writing *	4	17.4
research writing *	23	100
attendance policy *	17	73.9
formal course syllabus *	19	82.6
common syllabus *	3	13
manuscript format	14	60.9
plagiarism statement/policy	7	30.4
late work policy	16	69.6
grading system	17	73.9
grading sheet for writing	3	13

First, it should be noted that all fifty-seven responding colleges require some kind of writing course or courses on the freshman level. Three of the respondents require a course that does not follow the traditional freshman writing format. For instance, Goshen College requires a Humanities course that includes team teaching and writing across the curriculum; Messiah College stresses an interdisciplinary and team teaching approach in its course; Oral Roberts University does likewise in its course called Reading and Writing in the Liberal Arts. But since these are required freshman writing courses, their requirements and activities were evaluated along with the other colleges.

Table I--First Semester Courses

Table I includes several informational items that address general requirements or issues of concern in the first semester writing course. Of the fifty-seven colleges for which data on

required courses are available, thirty-four (59.6%) require only one composition course; the remaining twenty-three (40.4%) require two. Only three (5.26%) of the colleges offer an alternative or elective course other than the standard freshman writing course; most, fifty-four (94.74%), require specific standard freshman writing courses for their students. Only two colleges (3.51%) indicate in their syllabi some exemption allowance from one or more of the standard writing courses, but nine (15.8%) mention some sort of placement policy. This usually is stated in reference to those who show writing deficiency and are required to take a basic course in writing before entering the standard course.

The content of the majority of the freshman writing courses emphasizes expository writing. Fifty-three (93%) of the fifty-seven colleges include it as a major part of the first semester course. Research writing is included in the first semester courses of thirty-three (57.9%) colleges. Only slightly mentioned are writing about literature and critical thinking by five (8.77%) colleges and business and technical writing by three (5.26%) colleges.

Witte's lists included class size. He found the average class size of standard freshman writing courses to be 22.9. However, not one of the fifty-seven colleges included class size in its syllabi, so this statistic cannot be compared here.

Witte's lists also included an attendance policy, a formal course syllabus, and a common syllabus. These were computed along with several other general items mentioned in the CCC syllabi. Forty-eight (84.2%) of the fifty-seven have an

attendance policy specifically stated in their syllabi. Fifty-one (89.5%) have a formal course syllabus for their first semester standard freshman writing course. The six (10.5%) that do not have formal syllabi responded with an informal information sheet, letter, or catalog statement that briefly described their courses. But even though the majority of the respondents have formal course syllabi, only nine (15.8%) of the fifty-seven have a common departmental syllabus. The majority of the respondents allow individual instructors the liberty of constructing their own course syllabi. Some respondents included as many as five or six syllabi from different instructors. It should be noted here that though the syllabi were individual, all those from the same college included some common goals and requirements, though some more than others. Nine (15.8%) of the respondents require a grade of C to progress or to graduate; one (1.7%) college requires a grade of B. Forty-four (77.2%) of the syllabi include instructions on manuscript format. Twenty-three (40.4%) include a printed statement or policy on plagiarism in their syllabi while forty-five (78.9%) include a late work policy. Thirty-four (59.6%) include an explanation of the grading system for the course, and sixteen (28.1%) include a grading sheet or grading symbols for writing.

Table II--Second Semester Courses

The data in Table II reflects information from twenty-three respondents, those that require two semesters of freshman writing. The remaining thirty-four require only one course, so they do not show in these statistics.

None of the twenty-three respondents offer an elective

course; none offer exemption from the second semester course; only one (4.35%) indicates a placement policy.

The emphasis of the content of the course shifts in the second semester course. Only four (17.4%) stress expository writing while fifteen (65.2%) stress writing about literature and critical thinking. All twenty-three (100%) include research writing in the second semester, and four (17.4%) include business and technical writing.

Class size is not mentioned in any second semester syllabi. Seventeen (73.9%) include an attendance policy. Nineteen (82.6%) have a formal course syllabus, but only three (13%) have a common departmental syllabus. Three (13%) require a grade of C in the second semester course to progress or graduate. Fourteen (60.9%) include instructions on manuscript format; seven (30.4%) include a printed statement or policy on plagiarism; sixteen (69.6%) include a late work policy. Seventeen (73.9%) contain the course grading system, but only three (13%) include a grading sheet or grading symbols for writing.

Textbooks

One fairly good, yet general, indication of the nature of a writing course is the type or types of textbooks adopted. For example, writing courses that rely heavily on grammar and usage texts are likely to differ in important ways from courses that rely heavily on anthologies of short stories. In evaluating the texts, Witte's list of nine types of textbooks was used with the addition of one, the research paper style manual. This section reports on the types of textbooks used in the first and second semester standard collegiate level freshman writing courses of

the fifty-seven responding colleges of the Christian College Coalition. The findings appear in Tables III and IV.

Table III--Type of Textbooks Used in First Semester Standard Collegiate Level Freshman Writing Courses

Type of Text	N	%
grammar/usage handbook *	22	38.6
sent/paragraph workbook *	3	5.26
nonfiction anthology *	14	24.6
fiction/poetry anthology *	0	0
combination anthology *	5	8.77
how-to style book *	13	22.8
rhetoric with handbook *	36	63.2
rhetoric without handbook *	9	15.8
research paper style book	13	22.8
student writing as text *	0	0
other *	34	59.6

Table IV--Type of Textbooks Used in Second Semester Standard Collegiate Level Freshman Writing Courses

Type of Text	N	%
grammar/usage handbook *	6	26.1
sent/paragraph workbook *	0	0
nonfiction anthology *	1	4.35
fiction/poetry anthology *	7	30.4
combination anthology *	2	8.7
how-to style book *	8	34.8
rhetoric with handbook *	6	26.1
rhetoric without handbook *	0	0

research paper style book	12	52.2
student writing as text *	1	4.35
other *	9	39.1

Table III--First Semester Courses

Table III indicates generally both what type of textbooks are and are not used in first semester courses. For example, no (0%) syllabi at all includes any use of the fiction/poetry anthology or of student writing as the text. The combination anthology is listed by only five (8.77%) of the respondents while fourteen (24.6%) list the nonfiction anthology. Only three (5.26%) include the sentence/paragraph workbook in their syllabi, and only thirteen (22.8%) include the how-to style book. Just thirteen (22.8%) list the research paper style book as well. This seems to suggest three things. First, it suggests that first semester courses are not usually literature-based. Second, it suggests that the study of sentences, paragraphs, and style in isolation does not figure importantly in first semester courses. Third, it suggests that the new trend of student writing as text has not been embraced at all and suggests a more conventional and traditional approach to writing in the first semester courses. The relatively low number, nine (15.8%), of syllabi that indicate use of a classroom rhetoric without a handbook is misleading. Thirty-six (63.2%) indicate use of a classroom rhetoric with handbook, and combined the data show that forty-five (79%) use a classroom rhetoric of some type in the first semester courses. Table III also shows that twenty-two (38.6%) of the syllabi require the use of a grammar/usage handbook. Thus it would

appear that first semester freshman writing courses generally rely on some form of classroom rhetoric with some requiring some kind of grammar/usage handbook and a nonfiction reader if one is used at all.

Responses contained in the "other" category from thirty-four (59.6%) of the syllabi for the most part involve the requirement of a dictionary. A dictionary is mentioned almost all thirty-four times. Also mentioned from one to five times in this category are individual novels, vocabulary books, library sheets, a thesaurus, and the Bible.

Table IV--Second Semester Courses

Comparison of Tables III and IV show that in some ways the first and second semester freshman writing courses are the same, but that in other important ways they are different. Showing no (0%) use at all in the second semester are sentence/paragraph workbooks and rhetorics without handbooks. Use of the nonfiction anthology drops to one (4.35%) and student writing as text continues to be essentially nil with only one (4.35%) mentioning it. Only two (8.7%) syllabi mention the combination anthology. Six (26.1%) syllabi require the grammar/usage handbook and a rhetoric with handbook. Seven (30.4%) require a fiction/poetry anthology; eight (34.8%) require a how-to style book; twelve (52.2%) require a research paper style manual. Nine (39.1%) responses are in the "other" category. These responses include dictionaries, novels, and vocabulary books. The second semester courses rely heavily on research paper writing and more heavily on literature and readings than the first semester courses. Some rhetorics are still used, but in second semester courses, more

reliance on how-to style books indicates progression in the writing process from the first semester courses.

Papers

The amount and kinds of writing assigned in freshman writing courses are of interest to writing program directors and teachers for several reasons. The number of student papers submitted during a writing course affects the number of evaluations the teacher must perform and perhaps the quality of those evaluations as well. Also, the evaluation of student writing is for many teachers the most time-consuming aspect of teaching college writing and the source of many complaints. Additionally, the amount and kinds of writing that students are required to do contribute significantly to the way departments and teachers define their writing courses.

This section reports on how much writing is done and what kinds of papers are being written in first and second semester standard collegiate level freshman writing courses of the fifty-seven responding colleges. The findings appear in Tables V and VI.

Table V--Papers in First Semester Standard Collegiate Level Freshman Writing Courses

Papers	N	%	M	SD
# papers required (7.5) *	50	87.7	6.27	1.88
research paper--# pages	13	22.8	7.04	1.2
narrative paper *	33	57.9		
description paper *	28	49.1		
comparison/contrast paper *	29	50.9		
evaluation/criticism paper *	2	3.51		

process paper *	19	33.3
exemplification paper *	12	21.1
classification paper *	12	21.1
analysis paper *	25	43.9
persuasion paper *	31	54.4
definition paper	22	38.6
problem/solution paper *	2	3.51

Table VI--Papers in Second Semester Standard Collegiate Level Freshman Writing Courses

Papers	N	%	M	SD
# papers required (7.5) *	8	34.8	4.75	1.39
research paper--# pages	9	39.1	8.13	2.79
research paper procedures	9	39.1		
narrative paper *	3	13		
description paper *	3	13		
comparison/contrast paper *	0	0		
evaluation/criticism paper *	5	21.7		
process paper *	0	0		
exemplification paper *	0	0		
classification paper *	0	0		
analysis paper *	0	0		
persuasion paper *	4	17.4		
definition paper	0	0		
problem/solution paper *	0	0		

Table V--First Semester Courses

In his study Stephen Witte computed the average number of words required in the first semester freshman writing course, the average number of pages written, and the average number of papers written. Syllabi used in this study only offered information on the average number of papers written. However, Witte's averages give interesting data. In first semester courses Witte's average number of words required is 5,325; his average number of pages required is 35.5; his average number of papers is 7.5.

Of the fifty-seven respondents fifty (87.7%) of the syllabi include the number of papers required in the first semester course. The average number or mean of the fifty colleges is 6.27 with a standard deviation of 1.88. The spread is significant starting with two colleges that require three papers and going to two colleges that require ten and one that requires eleven papers. Thirteen (22.8%) syllabi include data on the research papers they require. The average or mean number of pages for the research paper is 7.04 with a standard deviation of 1.2. The spread here is from 5.5 pages to 9. Twelve (21.1%) syllabi further indicate a specific style for the research paper. Ten of the twelve cite the MLA style; two cite Turabian.

Many syllabi include specific citations of kinds of papers required during the first semester. The narrative paper is mentioned most frequently by thirty-three (57.9%) of the respondents. Thirty-one (54.4%) require a persuasion paper; twenty-nine (50.9%) require comparison/contrast; twenty-eight (49.1%) require description. Twenty-five (43.9%) syllabi cite the analysis paper; twenty-two (38.6%) the definition paper;

nineteen (33.3%) the process paper. Twelve (21.1%) require the exemplification paper, and the same number, twelve (21.1%), require the classification paper. Only two (3.51%) of the fifty-seven respondents mention the evaluation/criticism paper or the problem/solution paper as a requirement in their first semester courses. This supports the emphasis on expository writing as previously noted and the lack of emphasis in first semester courses on literature and its evaluation. It also indicates a strong emphasis upon narrative and descriptive writing as well.

Table VI--Second Semester Courses

Eight (34.8%) of the twenty-three responding colleges requiring second semester writing courses list the number of papers required in their syllabi. The average or mean number of papers required for second semester courses is 4.75 with a standard deviation of 1.39. The spread goes from two papers required by one college to six papers required by three. Nine (39.1%) list a required number of pages for the research paper. The average or mean number of pages for the research paper is 8.13 with a standard deviation of 2.79. This significant variance is reflected by a spread of five pages required by two colleges to fourteen pages required by one. Only four syllabi mention a specific research paper style: three require MLA; one requires Turabian. Further, nine (39.1%) list in their syllabi specific procedures to be followed in writing the research paper. Though several require research writing in the first semester, they do not specify certain research procedures in their syllabi.

The data on specific kinds of papers is significantly

reduced in the syllabi of second semester courses. Not mentioned at all by any of the twenty-three syllabi are the comparison/contrast paper, the process paper, the exemplification paper, the classification paper, the analysis paper, the definition paper, or the problem/solution paper. Only four kinds of papers are mentioned: five (21.7%) require evaluation/criticism papers; four (17.4%) require persuasion papers; three (13%) require narrative papers and description papers. These numbers reinforce the findings of the main emphasis on research paper writing in those colleges that require a second semester writing course. And when other areas of study are included, the emphasis does seem to shift from expository writing to more evaluative and literature-based writing.

Activities

Textbooks and papers may give a rather good, if limited, indication of the general nature of a writing course. However, they do not necessarily give a clear indication of the specific instructional and curricular activities that make up the course. Therefore, syllabi were also examined for activities that occur within the freshman writing courses. This section discusses activities that occur within the first and second semester standard collegiate level freshman writing courses of the fifty-seven responding colleges. The findings appear in Tables VII and VIII.

Table VII--Activities in First Semester Standard Collegiate Level Freshman Writing Courses

Activities	N	%
essay dev/org *	31	54.4

topic/thesis sentence *	34	59.6
revision/editing *	39	68.4
paragraph dev/org *	33	57.9
invention strategies *	5	8.77
peer editing *	15	26.3
prewriting *	23	40.4
in-class writing *	26	45.6
mechanics *	35	61.4
audience *	18	31.6
usage *	37	64.9
library skills *	25	43.9
journal writing *	23	40.4
sentence combining *	12	21.1
rhetorical theory *	0	0
reading comprehension *	6	10.5
readability	2	3.51
coherence	14	24.6
logical thought	23	40.4
diction/word choice	19	33.3
lab--recommended or required	8	14
conferences	28	49.1
computer use	6	10.5
report writing	1	1.75
analyzing published essays	15	26.3
vocabulary exercises *	11	19.3
oral presentations *	4	7.02
writing letters *	0	0
linguistics *	1	1.75

sentence analysis *	23	40.4
writing fiction/poetry	0	0

Table VIII--Activities in Second Semester Standard Collegiate Level Freshman Writing Courses

Activities	N	%
essay dev/org *	3	13
topic/thesis sentence *	4	17.4
revision/editing *	12	52.2
paragraph dev/org *	2	8.7
invention strategies *	0	0
peer editing *	1	4.35
prewriting *	1	4.35
in-class writing *	5	21.7
mechanics *	4	17.4
audience *	2	8.7
usage *	4	17.4
library skills *	14	60.9
journal writing *	2	8.7
sentence combining *	0	0
rhetorical theory *	0	0
reading comprehension *	7	30.4
readability	1	4.35
coherence	1	4.35
logical thought	9	39.1
diction/word choice	3	13
lab--recommended or required	5	21.7
conferences	8	34.8

computer use	2	8.7
report writing	1	4.35
analyzing published essays *	6	26.1
analyzing literary works	9	39.1
vocabulary exercises *	3	13
oral presentations *	3	13
writing letters *	3	13
linguistics *	1	4.35
sentence analysis *	1	4.35
writing fiction/poetry *	0	0

Table VII--First Semester Courses

The list of activities in Table VII shows the diversity of activities that are mentioned in freshman writing course syllabi. This diversity reinforces the idea that writing courses cover much material and make strong demands on students. But it also encourages the notion that many options for reaching goals are open to writing teachers. And even though Table VII reflects diversity, it also illustrates commonality among syllabi.

The most frequently occurring activity named in the syllabi is revision/editing (68.4%). Following revision in this first group of highest frequency are activities in usage (64.9%), mechanics (61.4%), topic/thesis sentence (59.6%), paragraph development/organization (57.9%), and essay development/organization (54.4%). This group of activities seems to suggest a high degree of emphasis upon writing skills. Organizing and structuring writing and higher proficiency in usage and mechanics seem to be of high priority. This finding

would support the conclusion that most of the syllabi reflect writing courses that are traditional in approach.

Although traditional in approach, some of the activities taking place in several college courses show an awareness of the process approach to writing and an attempt to incorporate some new techniques into the framework of the class. This can be seen in the next group of activities listed. Conferences (49.1%), in-class writing (45.6%), journal writing (40.4%), and prewriting (40.4%) follow with a relatively high degree of frequency. Included with this group are activities in logical thought (40.4%) and library skills (43.9%).

The rate of frequency drops significantly with the remaining activities. Diversity is again apparent. It is interesting to note that some process-oriented techniques such as activities relating to invention, audience, peer editing, sentence combining and writing labs are not mentioned often. Also, computer use in the writing classroom is only listed in 10.5% of the syllabi. Activities that received no citations at all are activities in rhetorical theory, writing letters, and writing fiction/poetry.

Table VIII--Second Semester Courses

Since the emphasis in the second semester courses shifts to research papers and literature, it is easy to understand that the activity with the highest frequency in Table VIII is library skills (60.9%). Further it is interesting to note that revision/editing (52.2%) maintains a high priority in second semester courses. These two activities measure significantly higher than any others, but four other activities show a fair level of frequency: logical thought (39.1%), analyzing literary

works (39.1%), conferences (34.8%), and reading comprehension (30.4%). The frequency of these activities is understandable during courses requiring the writing of a research paper and writing about literature. The absence of emphasis on reading comprehension or readability in the first semester courses seems to indicate that the use of readings is not great, but that it increases in those colleges that require two semesters of freshman writing. Some emphasis is maintained on mechanics (17.4%) and usage (17.4%). Computer use (8.7%) drops a little but stays essentially the same. Perhaps because of the added semester, some colleges include activities not mentioned before such as report writing (4.35%), vocabulary exercises (13%), oral presentations (13%), writing letters (13%), and linguistics (4.35%). Still, no syllabi mention writing fiction/poetry (0%), and none lists invention strategies (0%) in the second semester courses.

Evaluation

One important aspect of most writing courses is the source or sources of evaluations of student performance. The syllabi studied offer general sources of evaluation used in determining student grades in freshman writing courses. The items include specific evaluative tools as well as adherence to certain class policies. This section focuses on sources of evaluation used in first and second semester standard collegiate level freshman writing courses of the fifty-seven responding colleges. The findings appear in Tables IX and X.

Table IX--Sources of Evaluation in First Semester Standard Collegiate Level Freshman Writing Courses

Evaluation Source	N	%
out-of-class essay *	44	77.2
in-class essay *	26	45.6%
final examination *	40	70.2
participation *	26	45.6
attendance *	45	78.9
homework *	23	40.4
reading test *	0	0
grammar/usage test *	13	22.8
peer evaluation *	1	1.75
lectures/objective test *	10	17.5

Table X--Sources of Evaluation in Second Semester Standard Collegiate Level Freshman Writing Courses

Source of Evaluation	N	%
out-of-class essay *	17	73.9
in-class essay *	4	17.4
final examination *	10	43.5
participation *	8	34.8
attendance *	14	60.9
homework *	6	26.1
reading test *	0	0
grammar/usage test *	0	0
peer evaluation *	0	0
lectures/objective test *	13	56.5

Table IX--First Semester Courses

Table IX shows that the highest ranked sources of evaluation are attendance (78.9%), the out-of-class essay (77.2%), and the final examination (70.2%). Ranking drops significantly at this point to the in-class essay (45.6%) and participation (45.6%). Homework is cited as an evaluation source in 40.4% of the syllabi. Of small consequence in the first semester course as far as evaluation is concerned are grammar/usage tests (22.8%), lectures/objective tests (17.5%), peer evaluation (1.75%), and reading tests (0%). There is a fair amount of agreement across the responding colleges regarding the most important contributors to final grades in first semester courses. It should be noted that information regarding specific evaluation procedures are not available. These rankings only indicate that, for example, students' writing and class attendance weigh heavily in the grades they receive; the rankings do not reveal anything about the methods or criteria employed in evaluating that writing or attendance.

Table X--Second Semester Courses

Table X shows a similarity to Table IX in the two highest ranked sources of evaluation, though they have switched positions. Out-of-class essays (73.9%) rank highest followed by attendance (60.9%). Lectures/objective tests (56.5%) rise in standing and surpass the final examination (43.5%) in the second semester courses. Participation (34.8%) and homework (26.1%) both outrank in-class essays (17.4%), another indication of the switch in emphasis from expository writing to research writing. Scoring nothing at all in the second semester are reading tests

(0%); peer evaluation (0%), another indication as in the first semester of a traditional classroom approach; and grammar/usage tests (0%), these being given the first semester if given at all.

Olivet Nazarene University

This chapter would not be complete for purposes of this study without reporting on Olivet Nazarene University's ranking in relation to the rest of the respondents. The hypothesis states that Olivet will measure favorably with the majority of the respondents. This section reports on the areas in which Olivet does not support the hypothesis, those areas in which Olivet does not measure with the majority. If the area is not mentioned, Olivet ranks with the majority of the respondents.

First Semester Courses

Olivet ranks in the minority by requiring two semester of freshman writing. The majority (59.6%) require only one course. Since most require only one course, the majority (57.9%) require research writing in the first semester; Olivet does not. Most respondents have a formal course syllabus as Olivet does, but not a common departmental one. Olivet ranks with a small minority (15.8%) in having a common departmental syllabus. The majority (78.9%) include a specific statement or policy concerning late work; Olivet does not. Olivet requires a combination anthology; only 8.77% of respondents require this. When recommending or requiring papers, Olivet lists the description paper, the process paper, the classification paper, the analysis paper, and the problem/solution paper. Most respondents from 50.9% for the description paper to 96.49% for the problem/solution paper do not mention these papers. In the area of activities most syllabi do

not include activities that Olivet includes in its syllabus: prewriting, in-class writing, audience, library skills, readability, coherence, and logical thought. And in evaluation Olivet does not measure with the majority when it cites consideration of in-class essays, participation, and homework as part of its evaluation.

Second Semester Courses

Olivet requires business/technical writing in the second semester writing course; the large majority (82.6%) of respondents do not require it. Again as in the first semester, Olivet has a common syllabus; most (87%) do not. And most (69.6%) include a late work policy, but Olivet does not. Olivet's requirement of a combination anthology and rhetoric with handbook continues into the second semester, but it remains in the company of only a small minority, 8.7% for the anthology and 26.1% for the rhetoric. Further, Olivet's recommendation of a dictionary maintains its ranking in the "other" column of texts, but the majority (60.9%) of respondents shift from the first semester and drop their recommendation or requirement in this category in the second semester. Olivet's mention of a specific research paper style ranks with the minority, and its requirement of Turabian contrasts with the majority choice of MLA among those who do cite a specific style. In the area of activities Olivet ranks with a small minority when it mentions in its second semester syllabus essay development and organization, topic/thesis sentence, paragraph development and organization, mechanics, usage, readability, coherence, and logical thought. If mentioned, these activities are confined by most to the first

semester. And Olivet further ranks with the minority (39.1%) when it fails to include specific reference to library skills in the second semester course in which all (100%) respondents require research writing. As in the first semester Olivet ranks with the minority in citing in-class essays, participation, and homework as criteria for evaluation. But now it also measures with the minority (43.5%) in citing the final examination; most (56.5%) respondents do not mention a final examination in their second semester syllabi.

Closing Comment

It should be noted again that the findings here are based solely on specifically stated information found in course syllabi. They do not necessarily mean that certain requirements or activities do not take place in various courses, but they do mean that some items are considered necessary to place in a printed syllabus, and others are not. Only the printed data are recorded and reported on here. Further interpretation of the data and any implications or conclusions drawn from the data should keep this in mind.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

This section will discuss the importance of the findings of this study and what they might hold for the future of the standard collegiate level freshman writing courses at Olivet Nazarene University and other Christian College Coalition members. It is a cautious section, one that recognizes the limitations and strengths of the study and one that voices four major conclusions.

Analyzing syllabi does not ensure precise knowledge of what is occurring in freshman writing classrooms. The syllabi offer a view of the courses, but a view that remains a bit obscured. This study assumes that academic responsibility as well as academic freedom exists there. For this reason, reaching conclusions is difficult. Data are open to different interpretations depending on the audience. With this in mind, conclusions are reached in this study based on available data and present perspectives.

Major Conclusions

I. Standard collegiate level freshman writing courses are alive. The section of this report on The Problem and Its Setting closes by saying that the importance of these courses to the liberal arts core curriculum is rarely denied, but the existence of required courses is frequently debated. On the basis of the data collected in this study, the debate has little effect on reality. Required freshman writing courses exist in every responding college. Repeated attempts to abolish these courses

during their brief history of one hundred years or so have not succeeded, and predictions that these courses would fade such as the one by Smith in The Review of the Related Literature section have not proven true. Thomas Wilcox's conclusion in 1968 cited in The Review of the Related Literature seems to be true today. The freshman writing program is still a large and crucial component of the American college curriculum. The findings of Wilcox, Smith, ADE, the Forum for Liberal Education, and Witte all reinforce the findings of this report that freshman writing courses are not only offered, but also required by the vast majority of institutions of higher education today from Harvard University to the University of Michigan to fifty-seven responding members of the Christian College Coalition. Freshman writing courses do exist; they do teach young people to write; teachers do pay attention to what students say in papers; most students do learn.[1] Further reinforcing and validating their existence are the recommendations of the Carnegie Foundation in its 1986 report on colleges. The report recommends that in order to underline the importance of writing, all prospective college students should submit essays as part of their application for admission.[2] The Foundation cites proficiency in the written and spoken word as the first prerequisite for a college-level education. "To succeed in college, undergraduates should be able to write and speak with clarity, and....all college freshmen, not just those with special problems, [should] begin their undergraduate experience with a year-long course in English, with emphasis on writing."[3]

II. The structure of programs and content of standard

collegiate level freshman writing courses are diverse. This report calls attention to the differences by the range in the response categories and by the large standard deviations and variances in certain responses. The standard deviations recorded are 1.2, 1.39, 1.88, and 2.79. Diversity is evident throughout each section--general requirements, textbooks, papers, activities, and sources of evaluation. The number of additional activities added to Witte's list and the difference in measurement among all the activities strengthen the conclusion that writing programs and courses are diverse. So along with indicating existence of these courses, this study also indicates that content, emphasis, and methods differ significantly among colleges. Additionally, The Review of the Related Literature, particularly that part which cites specific college programs from the Forum for Liberal Education, supports the conclusion that writing programs and courses are generally different from one another. They are each designed to address primarily the local needs of the institution, the department, and the student body.

III. The nature of standard collegiate level freshman writing courses is still predominantly current-traditional in concepts, methods, and goals. The characteristics of the current-traditional approach described by Richard E. Young and listed in The Review of the Related Literature section of this report are strongly reflected in writing courses today. Young reached this conclusion in his study, the other research in The Review section supports this conclusion, and the findings in The Data section of this report bear it out. Emphasis on completing a certain number of finished essays that follow specific

rhetorical modes is strong. Course content is highly structured. Research is dominant, and strong concern for usage, style, words, sentences, and paragraphs is evident.

IV. The contemporary approach to writing courses as described by Maxine Hairston and listed in The Review of the Related Literature, though still in the minority, is making small yet significant inroads into standard collegiate level freshman writing courses. In The Review section such colleges as Beaver College, the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, and Albright College follow the contemporary approach in their writing courses. Stephen Witte listed and received measurable responses to items that reflect the contemporary approach. He found that writing program directors listed as some of their most successful such contemporary activities as laboratory/workshops, peer tutoring/collaborative learning, writing as process, revision skills, and student writing as text. (See Review of the Related Literature, pp. 16-17.) Further, this study also lists and measures items that indicate some application of the contemporary approach. A few years ago, many of these same items would not have been mentioned in a freshman writing course syllabus. Though the Christian College Coalition respondents are largely current-traditional in their approach, the data show that some are incorporating contemporary techniques into their course activities. This is especially noticeable by the high emphasis placed on revision/editing. It is also noted through measurable responses in other process-oriented activities as invention strategies, prewriting, journal writing, peer editing, in-class writing, audience, sentence combining, conferences, linguistics,

and even computer use. Computer use, though not necessarily a part of the contemporary approach, is a new technology, and its use in writing courses is of interest. Though measurably low, computer use is strongly emphasized when it is mentioned. Some syllabi require word processing and computer literacy as part of the freshman writing course. There appears to be movement toward the contemporary approach and computer use in freshman writing courses, though this movement is slow and cautious. Some colleges seem to be trying to incorporate parts of the contemporary approach without destroying the base of the current-traditional perhaps seeking a compromise or a marriage of sorts between the two.

Implications for Olivet Nazarene University

The way writing is taught may be reflected not only in students' academic behavior, but also in their social and private behavior. Perhaps when students learn about the way they ought to use language, they learn something about how to conduct their lives. If this is true, colleges should try to make certain that they are providing the best advice they can offer. Self-examination of the writing program can help reveal whether or not responsibilities are being met.[4] This study provides Olivet Nazarene University with an additional window through which to view its freshman writing courses so that it may more clearly evaluate them to see how they fulfill responsibilities to both writing students and instructors. The discussion here of the implications for Olivet keeps this in mind.

I. Because Olivet measures with the minority (40.4%) in its requirement of two semesters of freshman writing, one might

conclude that the college should reduce its requirement to one semester as the majority (59.6%) of respondents have done. But further examination of this finding tends to preclude such action. For instance, analysis should be made to determine the reasons for one semester only requirements. Are they educational, or are they economic? Low student population, lack of available funds, and budgetary constraints may play a part in cutting programs or keeping them at minimal levels. It would be important to determine if colleges that require only one course do so because it is educationally desirable or because it is economically necessary. Furthermore, if Olivet were to cut its program to one semester, the political implications would be great. Jobs would need to be eliminated, and tenured faculty would be threatened. With enough money to meet requirements, with enough qualified, capable faculty, and without strong, sound educational reasons for reducing requirements, colleges should not cut educational programs.

To further substantiate this conclusion are the findings of Wilcox in 1968, Witte in 1981, and the Carnegie Foundation's report on colleges in 1986. Wilcox found that 77.8 percent of surveyed colleges required two terms of freshman English; Witte found that 69.4 percent required two or three courses. The trend to reduce the requirement that seemed to occur in some colleges in the seventies seems to be reversing itself in the eighties. The Carnegie report affirms the reestablishment of two semesters of freshman English. It finds that the vast majority of colleges in the United States are not selective. With this open-door emphasis on recruitment and admission come students with great

diversity. This vvariety requires more programs, not fewer, and more time, not lesss, to meet students' needs. Recognizing proficiency in thee written and spoken word as the first prerequisite for aa college-level education, the Carnegie report recommends that "aall college freshmen, not just those with special problems, tbegin their undergraduate experience with a year-long course iin English, with emphasis on writing."[5] With these considerationns in mind, Olivet should not reduce its freshman writing rrequirement, but should maintain it in order to better meet the neeeds of its diverse student body and better prepare students tco meet the demands of the world at large today.

II. A seconnd area of consideration for Olivet is textbooks. The only firm findding is that seventy-nine percent of the respondents requirre some type of rhetoric in the first semester course. Olivet meeasures with the majority here, but does not when it continues tthe requirement into the second semester. The other majority finnding is the use of a research style manual by 52.2 percent of thhe respondents. Olivet also measures with the majority here, butt not in its choice of Turabian as its guide. But Olivet has alrready, since the inception of this study, changed its style ffrom Turabian to the new MLA style. Olivet's requirements of a rrhetoric and an anthology coincide with the findings of ADE inn 1974 and Witte in 1981 cited in the Review of the Related Literatature. But also cited by ADE, Witte, and this study (38.6% and 226.1%) is the grammar/usage handbook. Olivet does not require thhis, nor does it require the how-to-style book which also measurees with some degree of significance (22.8% and 34.8%) in this stuudy. Perhaps because of the diversity of texts

represented and because of the low occurrence of anthologies, Olivet should reexamine its criteria for textbook selection to ensure that the texts chosen will best help meet the goals and objectives of the freshman writing courses.

III. The requirement of a certain number of papers written in specific rhetorical modes continues to dominate standard freshman writing courses today. Here Olivet is no exception. Its requirement of six to seven papers in the first semester measures favorably with Witte's average of 7.5 papers and this study's average of 6.27 papers. And its required papers of comparison/contrast, narrative, and persuasion all measure above fifty percent in this study. The other required paper, analysis, measures a significant 43.9 percent. The other modes mentioned as options in Olivet's syllabus are also measured in this study. The findings of Witte in the Review of the Related Literature and the findings of this report help to validate Olivet's current-traditional approach to papers in the freshman writing course. The requirement of specific types of papers coupled with the flexibility of options for other papers is sound. However, as Witte and this study indicate, movement is being made toward the contemporary approach in writing courses. With this in mind, Olivet might consider an even greater degree of flexibility in its approach to numbers and types of papers required.

IV. Olivet's requirement of research writing in the second semester freshman writing course is validated by findings in the Review of the Related Literature and in this study. In first semester courses 50.9 percent require research writing while 100 percent require it in second semester courses. Closely connected

to research writing are library skills. In this study 43.9 percent of respondents in the first semester and 60.9 percent in the second semester mention library skills in their course syllabi. Definitive work in this area is sensible since it comes in conjunction with research writing. Interestingly enough though, Olivet merely mentions library exercises as possible daily work in its first semester syllabus and makes no mention of the library at all in its second semester syllabus when research writing is required. One of the goals of research writing and all college experience is to help students become independent, self-directed learners who become familiar with the valuable resources available to them through their campus library. During the research unit, freshman writing course instructors can help close the gap between the classroom and library that the Carnegie Foundation report says still exists today. The Foundation states that "the college library must be viewed as a vital part of the undergraduate experience."[6] The research writing section of freshman writing courses is the logical place to strengthen ties with the library and reinforce library skills. Therefore, Olivet should consider placing in its second semester freshman writing course syllabus an explicit statement regarding the importance of the college library and emphasis on activities requiring library skills.

V. Olivet requires that six weeks of its second semester freshman writing course and forty percent of the final grade be spent in the area of critical analysis or writing about literature. But it is in this area that the findings of this report seem the most obscure. In the Review of the Related

Literature section critical analysis of literature is mentioned occasionally, but no definite pattern or trend appears. Even Witte's findings are vague. He concludes that second semester courses tend to be more dependent on readings, perhaps literary, than first semester courses. (See Review of the Related Literature, p. 15.) This study's findings are no more definitive. Literary and critical thinking measures reasonably high (65.2%) for second semester courses, but fiction/poetry anthologies (30.4%), combination anthologies (8.7%), and evaluation/criticism papers (21.7%) measure comparatively low. They have some significance in second semester courses, but not to the degree and with the logical linkage that one might expect. Individual novels and other literary works are mentioned in the other category in the textbook listings, but not to any significant degree. Olivet might conclude that critical analysis does not carry the clear mandate in freshman writing courses that was once thought. This does not mean its inclusion in the syllabus is invalid or unsound. But these findings, however vague, imply that Olivet should reevaluate its freshman writing course goals and objectives to see if critical analysis warrants such a prominent place in the curriculum.

VI. The requirement of business/technical writing in standard freshman writing courses, while mentioned by ADE and Witte in the Review of the Related Literature and in this study, measures below twenty percent in all cases. In this study business/technical writing measures at 5.26 percent and 17.4 percent in first and second semester courses respectively. This finding of small significance indicates that colleges place

business/technical writing low on their level of priorities for freshman writing courses. Again, it does not mean that this practical emphasis on writing is not valuable or sound, but it does seem to indicate that in the light of the needs of writing students and the demands placed on writing courses today, most colleges feel that business/technical writing is not necessary for inclusion in a syllabus at this level. Because of these findings, Olivet would be advised to reevaluate its requirement of two weeks and ten percent of the final grade spent on business/technical writing. The requirement itself, notwithstanding the requirement of time and evaluation, seems to be inconsistent with this research. Therefore, Olivet might consider modification or elimination of its requirement of business/technical writing in its standard freshman writing course.

VII. The findings of this study justify the presence in Olivet's freshman writing course syllabi of statements regarding attendance, manuscript format, late work policy, a grading system, essay development, topic/thesis sentences, revision/editing, paragraph development, usage, mechanics, out-of-class essays for evaluation, attendance for evaluation, and a final examination for evaluation. Since these requirements and activities measure significantly in this study, Olivet should consider continuing the items that already appear in its syllabi and including the items that do not appear there. Finally, Olivet should review and discuss what Stephen Witte cites by writing program directors as the ten most successful aspects of college writing programs, many of which are measured in this

study. (See the Review of the Related Literature, pp. 16-17.)

Closing Comment

The chief goal of standard collegiate level freshman writing courses is to increase the students' ability to express themselves clearly and accurately in expository prose. But it seems that no one has devised an ideal way to do this with a group of students. Each group requires different methods and adaptations by the instructor. At the heart of each course is the instructor and his willingness to spend time with the students, to encourage, to read, and to respond intelligently to the students' writing. With Stephen Witte's survey as a guide, this study has focused on the general nature of freshman writing courses of Christian College Coalition members as revealed through their syllabi, on reaching some general conclusions, and on creating a profile that can help Olivet Nazarene University reassess its program and a profile that can reach across institutional lines. But, as Witte also stated, the specific ways, often abstract, indefinable, and immeasurable, writing instructors succeed in helping students become better writers are finally the most important components of any standard collegiate level freshman writing course.

Perhaps this report can help Olivet Nazarene University and other colleges reach some conclusions about their freshman writing program and its relation to the curriculum. It should confirm the need within English departments to seek discussion and agreement on the goals and methods of their program. A program that comes to terms with its goals and objectives is likely to achieve those goals. It is hoped that this research

will help Olivet Nazarene University and others clarify and reach their goals, both the immediate and practical and the long-range and global, that it will contribute a degree of self-awareness and a willingness to modify and adapt procedures to meet current educational demands, and that the information and observations that will issue from this study will add to the profession's enlightenment, to the growing body of knowledge concerning freshman writing courses, and to the maintenance of academic excellence.

Notes

[1]James A. Berlin, Writing Instruction in 19th Century American Colleges (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984), p. 91.

[2]"Prologue and Major Recommendations of Carnegie Foundation's Report on Colleges," The Chronicle of Higher Education 33 (5 November 1986): 18.

[3]"Prologue...," p. 19.

[4]Berlin, Foreword.

[5]"Prologue...," p. 19.

[6]"Prologue...," p. 20.

APPENDIX A

List of member colleges of the Christian College Coalition.

Anderson College
Asbury College
Azusa Pacific University
Bartlesville Wesleyan College
Belhaven College
Bethel College--Indiana
Bethel College--Kansas
Bethel College--Minnesota
Biola University
Bryan College
Calvin College
Campbell University
Campbellsville College
Central Wesleyan College
Colorado Christian
Covenant College
Dallas Baptist University
Dordt College
Eastern College
Eastern Mennonite College
Eastern Nazarene College
Evangel College
Fresno Pacific College
Geneva College
George Fox College
Gordon College
Goshen College
Grace College
Grand Canyon College
Greenville College
Houghton College
Huntington College
John Brown University
Judson College
King College
The King's College
Lee College
LeTourneau College
Malone College
Marion College
The Master's College
Messiah College
Mid-America Nazarene College
Milligan College
Mississippi College
Mount Vernon Nazarene College
North Park College
Northwest Christian College
Northwest Nazarene College
Northwestern College--Iowa
Northwestern College--Minn.
Nyack College
Olivet Nazarene University
Oral Roberts University
Palm Beach Atlantic College
Point Loma Nazarene College
Redeemer College
Roberts Wesleyan College
Seattle Pacific University
Simpson College
Sioux Falls College
Southern California College
Southern Nazarene University
Spring Arbor College
Sterling College
Tabor College
Taylor University
Trevecca Nazarene College
Trinity College
Trinity Christian College
Warner Pacific College
Warner Southern College
Westmont College
Wheaton College
Whitworth College

APPENDIX B

Sample of initial letter sent to member colleges of the Christian College Coalition.

September 1, 1986

English Department Chair
Anderson College
Anderson, Indiana 46012-3462

Dear English Department Chair:

I am writing to you to appeal for your help. All I ask is a few minutes of your time.

You can assist me in maintaining and improving the academic standards that are reflected in the standard collegiate level freshman writing courses here at Olivet. I am conducting an evaluative study of these courses by surveying members of the Christian College Coalition. What I need from you is one copy of the course syllabus for each of your standard collegiate level freshman writing courses.

As an enclosure with this letter you will find a stamped self-addressed envelope in which to mail your syllabi. You will also find a card on which you may indicate your desire to receive a report on the results of this study. I will be happy to share these results with you if you wish it. Simply mark the card, and include it in the envelope with the syllabi. Please return the material to me by Wednesday, October 1.

I appreciate your willingness to cooperate with me in this survey. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Judith A. Whitis
Instructor of English

APPENDIX C

Sample card enclosed with letter of request.

Dear Mrs. Whitis:

☐ Please send the results of your survey.
☐ I am happy to cooperate.

Anderson College
Anderson, Indiana 46012-3462

Please indicate any address change above.

Comments:

Name:_____

APPENDIX D

Sample of follow-up letter sent to non-responding member colleges of the Christian College Coalition.

October 6, 1986

English Department Chair
Anderson College
Anderson, Indiana 46012-3462

Dear English Department Chair:

All of us are busier these days than we should be, and most of us have a hard time meeting essential and required obligations. We know how the little extras sometimes receive our best intentions, but we also know that in reality few of us have the time we need to fulfill all those intentions.

I have had no reply to the letter that I hope reached you about four weeks ago. Perhaps you mislaid the letter, or it may have miscarried in the mail. Any one of dozens of contingencies could have happened.

In any event, would you consider sending me one copy of your syllabus for each of your standard collegiate level freshman writing courses. I would appreciate it if you could take the time in your busy schedule to send the syllabi. If you can, use the self-addressed stamped envelope and enclosure card I sent you. Please be sure the name of your institution appears somewhere on your syllabi if you do not return the enclosure card. Otherwise, I have no way of knowing who is sending the material.

Most of the colleges/universities have replied. I would like to hear from all before I begin compiling the data on October 23. Will you help me?

Thank you. I appreciate your kindness.

Sincerely,

Judith A. Whitis
Instructor of English

APPENDIX E

List of responding member colleges of the Christian College Coalition.

Anderson College
Asbury College
Azusa Pacific University
Bartlesville Wesleyan College
Bethel College--Indiana
Bethel College--Minnesota
Biola University
Bryan College
Calvin College
Campbell University
Campbellsville College
Central Wesleyan College
Covenant College
Dallas Baptist University
Dordt College
Eastern College
Eastern Mennonite College
Eastern Nazarene College.
Evangel College
Fresno Pacific College
Geneva College
George Fox College
Goshen College
Grace College
Grand Canyon College
John Brown University
The King's College
Lee College
Malone College
Messiah College
Mid-America Nazarene College
Mississippi College
North Park College
Northwest Nazarene College
Northwestern College--Iowa
Northwestern College--Minn.
Olivet Nazarene University
Oral Roberts University
Palm Beach Atlantic College
Point Loma Nazarene College
Redeemer College
Roberts Wesleyan College
Simpson College
Sioux Falls College
Southern California College
Southern Nazarene University
Spring Arbor College
Sterling College
Tabor College
Taylor University
Trevecca Nazarene College
Trinity College
Warner Pacific College
Warner Southern College
Westmont College
Wheaton College
Whitworth College

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